JANET NAPOLITANO
Governor

DONALD BUTLER
Director

Arizona Department of Agriculture

1688 W. Adams Street, Phoenix, Arizona 85007
(602) 542-4373 FAX (602) 542-5420

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MEDIA CONTACT: Katie Decker, 602-542-0958

Number of Vesicular Stomatitis Found In Horses in Arizona Increases From 3 to 11

(Phoenix, AZ) -- The Arizona Department of Agriculture has confirmed eleven cases of Vesicular Stomatitis in horses throughout Arizona. This comes nearly a month after the first case was confirmed on April 20, 2005. These premises have all been quarantined. The following is a list of areas where these cases exist:

- Camp Verde – 4 premises
- Wickenburg – 1 premise
- Wittmann – 2 premises
- Sedona - 1 premise
- Dewey – 1 premise
- Cottonwood – 1 premise
- Kirkland – 1 premise

This disease causes blister-like lesions to form in the mouth and on the dental pad, tongue, lips, nostrils, hooves, and teats. These blisters swell and break, leaving raw tissue that is so painful that infected animals generally refuse to eat or drink and show signs of lameness. Severe weight loss usually follows, and in dairy cows, a severe drop in milk production commonly occurs. Affected dairy cattle can appear to be normal and will continue to eat about half of their feed intake.

How is this disease transmitted?
Certain types of biting flies are known to transmit this disease, as well as direct contact with infected animals. However, other paths of transmission may exist.

Why is this important?
While vesicular stomatitis can cause economic losses to livestock producers, it is a particularly significant disease because its outward signs are similar to (although generally less severe than) those of foot-and-mouth disease, a foreign animal disease of cloven-hoofed animals that was eradicated from the United States in 1929. The clinical signs of vesicular stomatitis are also similar to those of swine vesicular disease, another foreign animal disease. The only way to tell these diseases apart is through laboratory tests.

Which animals are most susceptible?
Horses, swine and cattle are most at risk. However, other animals may also contract the disease.

Has this disease been found in the U.S. before?
Last year, Texas, New Mexico and Colorado had a problem with V.S., but Arizona managed to escape without any cases. This year, Arizona is the second state to detect the disease, which occurs normally on 5 to 8 year cycles.

How is this disease treated and is it fatal?
This disease has no known treatment and needs to run its course. The animal's immune system must be supported throughout the recovery. Most animals do not die of this disease. ###

www.agriculture.state.az.us. This report was primarily compiled from http://www.aphis.usda.gov.